Account of an antient Inſcription in North America.

By the Rev. Michael Lort, *D. D. V. P. A. S.*

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THE monuments of antient art noticed in North America have been ſo few, that the diſcovery of any ſuch has a particular claim to the attention of the learned in any part of the globe. When therefore I had found in a publication in that part of it [*a*], the following reference made to an antient inſcription

[*a*] A ſermon preached before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Eſq. L. L. D. governor and commander in chief, and the honourable general aſſembly of Connecticut, convened at Hertford at the anniverſary election, May 8, 1783, by Ezra Stiles, D. D. preſident of Yale College, Newhaven, printed by Thomas and Samuel Green, 1783, 8vo. pp. 200. Perhaps it may not be amiſs to mention how this inſcription came to be noticed in a ſermon preached before the governor and ſtate of Connecticut.

The ingenious preacher, fired with the idea of a new and extenſive empire riſing in America, ſuppoſes that the celebrated prophecy of Noah concerning his ſons, and the future fate of their deſcendants, being at preſent in part only fulfilled, is to meet with its full and final completion in America.

The prophecy runs thus, Geneſis ix. 25, 6, 7.

" Curſed be Canaan; a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be to his brethren.—
" Bleſſed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan ſhall be his ſervant.—God
" ſhall enlarge Japheth, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan
" ſhall be his ſervant."

Theſe three ſons of Noah are ſuppoſed to have peopled the three parts of the world, Africa, Aſia, and Europe.

Some of the deſcendants of Ham and of Canaan ſettled in Africa have been long ſervants to the deſcendants of Shem and of Japheth ſettled in Aſia and Europe; but the prophecy of the territories of Japhet being enlarged, Dr. Stiles ſuppoſes is to take place by the deſcendants of Japheth ſpreading over America, as they have done over Europe, and wholly extirpating the native Indians.

tion diſcovered on a rock in Taunton River in Narraganſet Bay, I thought this an object worthy the attention of the Society. In page 12 the learned Author writes thus:

"The Phœnicians charged the Dighton and other rocks in "Narraganſet Bay with Punic inſcriptions remaining to this "day, which laſt I myſelf have repeatedly ſeen and taken off "at large, as did profeſſor Sewell. He has lately tranſmitted a "copy of this inſcription to Mr. Gebelin of the Pariſian Aca-"demy of Sciences, who, comparing them with the Punic "paleography, judges them to be Punic, and has interpreted "them as denoting that the antient Carthaginians once viſited "theſe diſtant regions."

Theſe Indians he ſuppoſes to be the deſcendants of Canaan, who being expelled by Joſhua and the Iſraelites from the land of Canaan, did ſome of them wander to and ſettle in America. As a foundation, in part, for this hypotheſis, he introduces theſe Naraganſet rocks with inſcriptions on them, which, being, as he imagines, in the old Punic or Phœnician character and language, he thinks were the work of the original ſettlers of that nation. After diſcuſſing this matter at large, he ſays, "The European population ſo far ſurpaſſes them (the Indians) already, "that of whatever origin they came, they will eventually be, as the moſt of "them have already become, ſervants unto Japheth. We are increaſing with "great rapidity, and the Indians as well as the million Africans in America "are decreaſing as rapidly: both left to themſelves in this way diminiſhing "may gradually vaniſh, and thus an unrighteous ſlavery, may in God's good "providence be aboliſhed and ceaſe in this land of liberty."

One more prediction I will take the liberty of recording here, "The rough "ſonorous diction of the Engliſh language may here take its Athenian poliſh, "and receive its Attic urbanity, as it will probably become the vernacular "tongue of more numerous millions than ever yet ſpoke a language on earth."

"God in his providence has ordered, that at the Reformation the Engliſh "tranſlation of the Bible ſhould be made with greater accuracy than any other "tranſlation. It may have been deſigned by Providence for the future peruſal "of more millions than ever were able to read any one book, and for their "uſe to the millenian ages."

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This extract was accompanied with the only copy of the inſcription I was then acquainted with, as it appears in the eighth volume of M. Gebelin's *Monde Primitif*, and together with the copy of the inſcription, I exhibited alſo the interpretation given by this celebrated writer [*b*].

Having ſince found that copies of it had been ſent, at different times by different perſons, both to the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries, though no notice had been taken thereof in the printed Memoirs of either Society, except a very ſlight one in the Philoſophical Tranſactions for the year 1714; I have therefore, from the minute books of each Society, collected together theſe different accounts, and, together with the drawings which accompanied them, ſubmit them to the inſpection of this learned body; and by their means, if it ſhall be thought proper, to the world at large; thereby affording an opportunity to any perſon who ſhall be inclined to examine and compare them with M. Gebelin's interpretation, and may not be ſatisfied therewith, to favour the world with a different one.

[*b*] M. Court de Gebelin, ſon of a paſtor at Lauſanne, and born there in 1727, came to Paris in 1763, where ſome years after he put out propoſals for a large work to be publiſhed by ſubſcription, entituled, *Le Monde Primitif analyſé et comparé avec le Monde moderne, ou Recherches ſur l'Antiquité du Monde.*

This work meeting with great encouragement was extended to nine volumes in 4to, when his health being much impaired by too ſevere an application to his ſtudies, he was forced for a time to intermit them, and applied to the celebrated magnetic doctor M. Meſmer for relief, by whoſe operations he flattered himſelf he had received ſo much that he addreſſed a memoir to his ſubſcribers in 1783, reckoned one of the ableſt defences of M. Meſmer and his operations; but he relapſed, and being removed to Mr. Meſmer's houſe died there in 1784, which occaſioned the following lines:

Cy git ce pauvre Gebelin,
Qui parloit Grec, Hebreu, Latin.
Admirez tous ſon heroiſme,
Il fût martyr de magnetiſme.

From the minutes of this Society it appears that a drawing of this inſcription had been made ſo long ago as the year 1680 by Dr. Danforth; but the firſt public notice I can find taken of it in this country, is in the Philoſophical Tranſactions for the year 1714, N° 339. The Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather of Boſton in New England, in a letter addreſſed to Dr. Waller, Secretary of the Royal Society, dated November 12, 1712, amongſt other pieces of literary information, gives the following:

"At Taunton, by the ſide of a tiding river, part in, part "out of the river, there is a large rock, on the perpendicular "ſide of which, next to the ſtream, are ſeven or eight lines, "about ſeven or eight feet long, and about a foot wide, each "of them engraven with unaccountable characters, not like "any known character. I have not yet been able to procure "the whole, but have ſent a copy of two of them." See Plate XVIII. N° 1.

It does not appear that Dr. Mather communicated any thing farther on this ſubject to the Royal Society; but in the year 1732, Mr. Bogdani, a member of this Society, exhibited a drawing of it made by Dr. Danforth in 1680; and another of a later date by Dr. Iſaac Greenwood, Holliſian Profeſſor at Cambridge, in New England; Pl. XVIII. N° 3 and 2. with an extract of a letter from this gentleman to the Rev. Mr. Villan, Rector of St. John's, Tothillfields, in the following words:

"I am informed that, at ſome extraordinary tides, the water "ebbs below the rock; and ſome perſons of undoubted veracity "belonging to the town aſſure me, that the river has been "conſtantly encroaching on that part of the beach, ſo as to "waſte the adjacent lands; which, ſince the memory of many "now living, is ſomething more diſtant from the rock than "formerly, though now but a few feet; and that there are "the like figures for ſome feet under the preſent ſurface of the "beach,

" beach, which is marked in the drawing AE. In deter-
" mining the characters, or figures, I found ſome difficulty;
" for the indentures, at preſent, are not very conſiderable, nor
" I think equally deep, which put me upon the following rule,
" viz. carefully to trace out and chalk all ſuch places, and
" thoſe only, which I really believed indentures; and in this
" part I deſired the reviſal and aſſiſtance of the Rev. Mr. Fiſher
" and others: many places were paſſed over which did not
" ſeem to be indentures as to the eye, though remarkably diſ-
" coloured by ſome adherent matter; in correſponding figures
" to the reſt, I thought it more adviſeable to give ſuch parts of
" theſe characters as were real, that thereby the whole might
" be obtained, than to run the riſk of a conjectural deſcription,
" which would certainly have endangered the diſcovered parts;
" and for this reaſon I muſt alſo note that the figures are not
" all ſo well defined as I have expreſſed them; the bounds be-
" ing ſcarcely perceivable in ſome of them; the ſtrokes may
" be alſo ſomething, though very little broader, their direction
" being chiefly what I aimed at. Time is ſuppoſed to have
" gradually impaired them, and one of advanced years in the
" town told me, that he was ſenſible of ſome alteration ſince
" his memory; and for this reaſon I have alſo ſent you N° 3,
" which is a drawing of ſome part of this inſcription, taken by
" the Rev. Mr. Danforth, in 1680. This gentleman obſerves,
" with relation to it, that there was a tradition went current
" with the oldeſt Indians, that there came a wooden houſe,
" and men of another country in it, ſwimming upon the river
" *Aſſoonet*, as this was then called, who fought the Indians
" with mighty ſucceſs, &c.

" This, I think, evidently ſhews that this monument was
" eſteemed by the oldeſt Indians, not only very antique, but
" a work of a different nature from any of theirs. It may not

" be

" be improper to add here, that this place was one of the moſt " conſiderable ſeats of the Indians in this part of the world, " and the river very remarkable for all ſorts of fowl and fiſh.

" N° 2. Pl. XVIII. A. B. C. D. E. repreſent the face of the " rock, being a plain nearly perpendicular to the horizon, look- " ing north by weſt; in length from B to D eleven feet, and " in depth from C to F four feet and a half. This ſeems to " have been left by nature very ſmooth, and is certainly in " its ſurface very uniform, compact, and durable. B. G. D. " repreſent the ſurface of the water at the time of obſervation.

" N° 3. is the inſcription as taken by Dr. Darnforth in 1680."

Thus far from the minutes of this Society, in which I can find no farther notice taken of this inſcription; but from the Minutes of the Royal Society for the year 1775, it appears that a new copy of the inſcription, with the following account thereof, was delivered in to that Society [*c*].

" Some years ſince the late Mr. Eames applied to Mr. Ti- " mothy Hollis, to write to Mr. Winthrope, Holliſian Pro- " feſſor of Mathematics at Cambridge in New England, at " the deſire of a gentleman at Berlin, or ſome part of Germany, " of great learning and knowledge in languages, to procure a " more accurate copy of the inſcription on the rock at Dighton. " Mr. Hollis did write accordingly, but never received an an- " ſwer; and Mr. Eames dying ſoon after, nothing further was " done in it. Laſt ſummer, Mr. Hollis being favoured with " a viſit from Mr. Bernard, this matter happened to be men- " tioned, and, in conſequence thereof, Mr. Hollis has been " favored with a letter from Mr. Winthrope, with a copy of " the inſcription; of which letter is the following extract:

[*c*] A ſhort abſtract only appears in the minutes, but I was favoured with a ſight of the whole paper by Timothy Hollis, Eſq. of Great Ormond Street.

" Cam-

" Cambridge, in New England, Nov. 14, 1774.

" I went to ſee this rock above 30 years ago, and then took " an imperfect copy of the inſcription, and ſaw it again laſt " ſpring; ſome copies of it have formerly been taken; part of " one may be ſeen in the Philoſophical Tranſactions, No. 339. " where it is repreſented in two diſtinct lines. The rock is " of a dark reddiſh color, ſtanding on the brink of Taunton " river, about forty-three miles ſouth of Boſton. The face " of it next the river is plane, not perpendicular, but reclining " backward. The inſcription almoſt fills this plane ſide. When " I ſaw it laſt, the tide covered all but the upper part of it. " According to the beſt of my remembrance, the characters do " not appear ſo plain now as they did about thirty years ago. " About ſix years paſt, Mr. Sewell, our Profeſſor of Hebrew, " and other Oriental languages, took the moſt exact copy of " it, that I believe was ever taken, as large as the original, and " which is now depoſited in our Muſeum. A copy of this, re- " duced by Mr. Sewell, I have now the honour of ſending to " you, through Mr. Barnard's hands, to be preſented to the " Royal Society, if you think proper. I wiſh the learned gen- " tlemen of that Society may be able to throw any light upon " it, or diſcover any ſimilarity between theſe and any other " known characters or hieroglyphics. There ſeem to be in it " four human figures, though very rudely executed. Thoſe " on the left hand have ſome appearance of a woman and a " child by her. Thoſe on the right are nearly of a bigneſs; " on the lower ſide, near the middle, there ſeems to be ſome " reſemblance of a quadruped with horns; none of theſe things " appear in the copy in the Philoſophical Tranſactions, N° 339. " Whether this was deſigned by the Indians as a memorial of " any remarkable event, or was a mere *luſus* at their leiſure " hours,

" hours, of which they have a great number, I cannot pretend " to ſay. 'Tis certain it was done before the Engliſh ſettled in " this country."

Such are the different accounts that have been exhibited in this country of this American inſcription. When I firſt ſaw it in M. Gebelin's book, I own I could conceive of it as nothing more than the rude ſcrawls of ſome of the Indian tribes, commemorating their engagements, their marches, or their hunting parties, ſuch as are to be ſeen in different accounts of theſe nations, and very lately exhibited to this Society by a worthy member of it [*d*]. And I was happy to find this notion coincided with Mr. Winthrop's ideas on the ſubject, as given in the concluſion of his letter.

It is upon this ſuppoſition only that I can account for the little or no attention that has hitherto been paid in this country to this ſuppoſed memorial of antient times in North America, after having been exhibited, at diſtant periods, no leſs than three times to the Royal and Antiquarian Societies in this metropolis.

The *Literati* of that part of the world certainly did their parts in ſending repeated accounts and exhibitions of it to the *Literati* here; who, upon a ſuppoſition of its being the work of the Indians, might probably conclude that the interpretation would be beſt made upon the ſpot by thoſe who had better opportunities of converſing with and knowing the people who ſeemed to have the beſt claim to its fabrication.

Some conjectures as to its origin we find ſtated in the letter which accompanied the copy of the inſcription ſent from America to M. Gebelin; from which it appears that this copy was from the ſame original draught from which Mr. Winthrop's copy, ſent to Mr. Hollis, and now exhibited [*e*], was

[*d*] See in the ſixth volume of the Archæologia, p. 159, " Obſervations on " the Indian Method of Picture Writing, by William Bray, Eſq."

[*e*] Plate XIX. fig. 1.

taken.

taken. This draught was made September 13, 1768, by Meſſrs. Stephen Sewell, and Thomas Darnforth, aſſiſted by Meſſrs. William Baylis, Seth Williams, and David Cobb.

In the letter to M. Gebelin, accompanying this copy, it is ſaid—" The convenience of the road, and the facility of na- " vigating the river to this place, give reaſon to ſome to ſup- " poſe it the work of the Phœnicians, driven hither from the " European coaſts; others ſuppoſe it is rather an hieroglyphic " inſcription than alphabetic characters, and that therefore it " may be the work of the Chineſe or Japaneſe."

The hint given in the former paragraph of a Phœnician origin was not loſt upon M. Gebelin. When he received it, he was engaged in that part of his work which led him to prove that the Phœnicians had, in their early voyages, viſited all parts of the globe. He therefore falls into raptures on receiving this additional proof and ſupport of his ſyſtem. To uſe his own expreſſions [*f*]: " It ſeemed to have come expreſs " from that part of the globe, to confirm his notions of the " very early communications that ſubſiſted between the old

[*f*] " Il ſemble arriver du nouveau monde tout exprés pour confirmer nos " vues ſur l'ancienne communication de l'ancien et du nouveau monde. Nous " l'avons fait graver avec la plus grande exactitude; on y verra de la maniere la " plus vraiſemblable, nous dirions preſqu' evidente, que c'eſt un monument " Phénicien, et ſans doute Carthaginois, diviſé en trois ſcènes, une paſsée, " une preſente, une future.

" La preſente, ſur le devant du tableau, deſigne une alliance entre les peuples " Américains et la nation etrangere. La ſcène paſsée repreſente ces etrangers " comme venant d'un pays riche et induſtrieux et comme ayant été amenés avec " le plus grand ſuccés par un vent du nord.

" Les ſymboles et les caracteres alphabétiques de ce monument ſe réuniſſent " pour prouver que ces ſont des Carthaginois; et puis en reflechiſſant un peu, " on n'eſt pas plus etonné de voir ce peuple dans ces contrees, que d'y trouver " des Iſlandois et des Gallois aux xe et xie Siecles, et Colomb a xve." *Diſcours Preliminaire*, p. 13. vol. VIII.

" and the new world. You ſee (continues he) on a bare in-
" ſpection of this monument, the moſt probable, I had almoſt
" ſaid the moſt evident marks of its being Phœnician, and,
" without doubt, Carthaginian, divided into three ſcenes, paſt,
" preſent, and to come." The middle, or principal, part of
" the picture exhibits an alliance between the Americans and
" newly-arrived ſtrangers. The paſt ſcene, which is on the
" right, repreſents theſe ſtrangers as coming from a far coun-
" try, fruitful and cultivated, by favour of a north wind.
" The third diviſion to the left exhibits the ſtrangers conſulting
" an oracle for their proſperous return."

Whoever wiſhes to ſee all this, more in detail, may conſult the eighth volume of M. Gebelin's *Monde Primitif* [*g*].

A learned member of this Society, Colonel Vallancey, has ſtarted an idea concerning the origin of this inſcription, which ſeems to carry a greater air of probability, that it was not made either by the Phœnicians or Carthaginians, but that it has a great reſemblance to ſome of thoſe found on rocks in Tartary and Siberia, which are deſcribed and figured by Strahlenbergh, in his Deſcription of the Northern and Eaſtern coaſts of Europe and Aſia ; [*b*] that it was probably, therefore, the work of the ſame race of people who formerly poſſeſſed thoſe countries, and paſſed from thence to the great continent of America.

The Colonel having in his memoir referred to an inſcribed ſtone found at a conſiderable diſtance in the interior parts of North America, it may not be amiſs to give the hiſtory of it as exhibited by Mr. Kalm, in the third volume of his Travels into North America, p. 123.

[*g*] P. 57, and 561. M. Gebelin's engraved copy of the inſcription agrees pretty exactly with No. 1. pl. XIX. It would ſcarce be ſuppoſed he could be ſerious in the explanation he has given of it, by any one that did not conſider how far a man may be carried by attachment to a ſyſtem.

[*b*] See pl. XIX. fig. 2.

" Some

" Some years before I came into *Canada*, the then governor-
" general, *Chevalier de Beaucharnois*, gave M. de Verandrier an
" order to go from *Canada*, with a number of people, on an ex-
" pedition acroſs North America to the South Sea, in order to
" examine how far theſe two places are diſtant from each other,
" and to find out what advantages might accrue to Canada or
" Louiſiana, from a communication with that ocean. They
" ſet out on horſeback from *Montreal*, and went as much due
" weſt as they could on account of the lakes, rivers, and moun-
" tains, which fall in their way. As they came far in the coun-
" try, beyond many nations, they ſometimes met with large
" tracts of land, free from wood, but covered with a kind of
" very tall graſs, for the ſpace of ſome days journey. Many of
" theſe fields were every where covered with furrows, as if they
" had been ploughed and ſown formerly. It is to be obſerved
" that the nations, which now inhabit North America, could
" not cultivate the land in this manner, becauſe they never made
" uſe of horſes, oxen, ploughs, or any inſtrument of huſbandry,
" nor had they ever ſeen a plough before the Europeans came to
" them. When they came far to the Weſt, where, to the beſt
" of their knowledge, no *Frenchman* or *European* had ever been,
" they found in one place in the woods, and again on a large
" plain, great pillars of ſtone leaning upon each other. The
" pillars conſiſted of one ſingle ſtone each; and the Frenchmen
" could not but ſuppoſe that they had been erected by human
" hands. Sometimes they have found ſuch ſtones laid upon
" one another, and, as it were, formed into a wall. In ſome
" of thoſe places where they found ſuch ſtones, they could not
" find any other ſorts of ſtones. They have not been able to
" diſcover any characters or writing upon any of theſe ſtones,
" though they have made a very careful ſearch after them. At
" laſt they met with a large ſtone like a pillar; and in it a ſmall

" ſtone was fixed, which was covered on both ſides with un-
" known characters. This ſtone, which was about a foot of
" French meaſure in length, and between four and five inches
" broad, they broke looſe and carried to *Canada* with them,
" whence it was ſent to France to the ſecretary of ſtate,
" the Count de Maurepas. What became of it afterwards is
" unknown to them, but they think it is yet preſerved in his
" collection. Several of the Jeſuits, who have ſeen and handled
" this ſtone in *Canada*, unanimouſly affirm, that the letters
" on it are the ſame with thoſe which, in the books contain-
" ing accounts of *Tataria*, are called *Tatarian* characters;
" and that, on comparing both together, they found them
" perfectly alike. All that the Indians could ſay of theſe
" ſtones was, that they had been in thoſe places ſince time
" immemorial. The places where the pillars ſtood, were near
" nine hundred French miles weſtward of Montreal."

The above extract certainly deſerves the attention of every ſearcher into remote antiquity, and is favourable to the opinions of thoſe who conſider the Narraganſet inſcription as ſomething better than the rude ſcrawl of modern Indians. Though I have, myſelf, no better conjecture to offer, yet, if the different copies and accounts of it which I have been able to collect ſhall enable any perſon to throw any new light on ſo obſcure a ſubject, I ſhall think the attention I have paid to it amply recompenſed.

M. LORT.

Obſer-

Obſervations on the American *Inſcription. By Colonel* Charles Vallancey, *F. A. S.*

THE attention of the Society has been lately much taken up with the explanation given by M. Gebelin of the Taunton inſcription in New England. That French author being inclined to aſcribe the inſcription on the rock to Phœnicians or Carthaginians, I beg leave to offer a few obſervations thereon.

The drawing of the inſcription ſent to M. Gebelin was taken by Dr. Greenwood in the year 1730. The rock, ſituated at the water edge, was then much decayed. " I traced," ſays the Doctor, " with chalk, all ſuch places *I believed* were really " indentures; and *paſſed over many*, which did not ſeem to have " been originally indented; and I muſt take notice, that the " figures are not *all ſo well defined as I have expreſſed them.* " Time has gradually impaired them; and an old man of the " town told me, he remembered them more perfect."

Doctor Greenwood's drawing contains three human figures, two on the right hand, and one on the left; and from theſe, M. Gebelin, ſkilled in the hieroglyphics of the ancients, and much addicted to ſymbolical and allegorical explanations, has made out a debarkation of the Phœnicans, and a ſacrifice to the gods of the ſea.

I am confident, Dr. Greenwood's account did not accompany the drawing, or M. Gebelin would not have hazarded an ex-

explanation ſo repugnant to all hiſtory. Many letters paſſed between me and Gebelin on this ſubject; at length he acknowledged his doubts; in ſhort, tacitly gave up the point.

As a member of the Philoſophic Society of Philadelphia, and of the learned body here preſent, I could not reſt ſatisfied till I had obtained further information of this Taunton inſcription; and I have the pleaſure of laying before the Society a fac ſimile copy of the inſcription, taken before the ſtone was impaired or injured, exactly half a century prior to Dr. Greenwood's drawing. This was made by the Rev. Mr. Danforth, in the year 1680. Pl. XVIII. N° 3.

In this drawing there are no human figures, or any thing that could poſſibly lead M. Gebelin to the explanation he has given. It is evidently an inſcription free from hieroglyphics.

The only deſcription that accompanies Mr. Danforth's drawing is this: "There is a tradition amongſt the oldeſt Indians, "that there came a wooden houſe, and men of another coun-"try in it, ſwimming up the river *Aſſoonet*, as the Taunton "was then called, who fought the Indians with mighty ſuc-"ceſs." This may refer to the arrival of the Engliſh, and not to Phœnicians: it is highly improbable, that a people, who can give no account of their own origin, ſhould, by tradition, be able to relate a tranſaction of ſo early a date as the time of the exiſtence of the Phœnicians. But Dr. Greenwood thinks this tradition is ſufficient to ſhew the monument was eſteemed not only very antique, but of a different natnre from any of theirs.

I muſt confeſs myſelf of opinion, that this monument, or inſcription, was the work of a race of people who arrived on this great continent prior to the preſent race of Indian ſavages; and I have ſomewhere read of an obeliſk and inſcription having been diſcovered many days journey N. W. of Quebec: the country

country was unpeopled: marks of the plough were to be ſeen; and the ſtone, containing the inſcription, happened to be looſe, and was brought to Quebec by theſe French itinerants, and, it is ſaid, tranſmitted to the French miniſter [*a*].

The inſcription made by a prieſteſs of the Michmac Indians, in preſence of Judge Spry and his ſiſter, at Halifax, copied in the Minutes of the Society, November 20, 1766, is another inſtance, that letters or characters did once flouriſh with this people. The French Miſſionaries may aſſume to themſelves the honour of teaching the Michmacs that character; but whoever attentively inſpects it, will readily perceive, that they would have invented one more applicable to the ſuperſtitious religion theſe good Miſſionaries were endeavouring to eſtabliſh, and that there is a medium between hieroglyphics and characters in the Michmac inſcription.

In the controverſy with Monſ. Gebelin, he obſerved to me, "You have proved the Algonkin language of America (now "almoſt loſt) to have been the ſame with the old Scytho-Iriſh, "and *that* you have proved to be Punic; ergò the Punic and "the Algonkin were the ſame." This argument is futile and puerile.

The ancient Iriſh, I do apprehend, were deſcended of the old Scythians of Armenia, who extended themſelves eaſtward to Thibet, and north weſtward to Siberia; and I do imagine they may have croſſed over to America from Kamtchatka. The diſcoveries of our countryman Captain Cook, and the converſation I have had with Captain King and others, who were in theſe parts, have confirmed my opinion in this matter [*b*].

If

[*a*] See before, p. 299.

[*b*] C'eſt donc encore la poſtèritè de Japhet, qui non contente de ſon ancien extenſion, dans des ſiécles plus récens s'eſt allée planter ſur les cotes d'Afrique, dans l'*Amerique*, et de là juſques dans le fond de l'Aſia: de ſorte qu'on la voit actuellement

If the original inhabitants of America had the uſe of ſuch a character as repreſented by the Rev. Mr. Danforth, and if theſe aborigines came from Siberia to that great continent, the natural inference is, that, in Siberia, we may expect to find ſimilar monuments.

The learned Strahlenburg traverſed moſt parts of Siberia; and he gives us an account of ſeveral inſcriptions to be met with in that country. Some he had heard of, and others he had ſeen, and has favoured the publick with drawings of them.

From theſe I have ſelected one [*i*], which, in my humble opinion, bears ſo ſtrong a reſemblance of the New England inſcription [*k*], there can be little doubt of their being written by the ſame people. Theſe are alſo written on perpendicular rocks, forming the banks of rivers; a ſtrong inſtance of that people having been navigators.

All the inſcriptions in Siberia were not made by the original inhabitants of that country, if we may credit Monſ. La Croix. In his Hiſtory of Timur Bec, tom. II. he ſays, "The great "Tamerlane purſued his march through Siberia, over the river "Irtiſh as far as Bucharia; and there the generals ſtopt ſome "days, croſſing the river frequently, to engrave their arms and "cyphers on the pines of the woods."

In another place, he ſays, "Timur halted near the river "Jeniſei, one whole day, and commanded his ſoldiers to raiſe "an obeliſk of rude ſtones, which in an inſtant appeared as a "minaret, or tower: on this, able engravers marked the date

actuellement établie dans les quatre parties du monde à la fois. Si les monumens, qu'ils ont laiſsées, ſe trouvent plus entiers en certains lieux qu'en d'autres, c'eſt par une conſéquence neceſſaire dans ceux qui ont été moins expoſés aux ravages des nations deſtructrices, aux guerres fatales, et aux autres révolutions (Diſſertation addreſſée aux Académies ſcavantes de l'Europe, ſur les Brigantes, p. 90.)

[*i*] Pl. XIX. N° 5. [*k*] Pl. XVIII. N° 3.

"of

"of the year, and the day that Timur penetrated thus "far."

Strahlenburg ſays, he had heard there was ſuch an obeliſk and an inſcription ſtill exiſting on Mount Itick, between the rivers Iſchim and Irtiſch, but could get no account of the nature of the characters.

The inſcriptions, here given from that author, were taken from places far remote from Timur's progreſs in that country.

Much information on this ſubject may be expected from the diligent reſearches now making in Siberia, by order of the Empreſs of Ruſſia; and, till the publication of theſe diſcoveries, we muſt poſtpone all further conjectures on theſe inſcriptions.

I therefore conclude, that the Taunton inſcription was not made either by Phœnicians or Carthaginians, as M. Gebelin has aſſerted, but by the ſame race of people, who formerly poſſeſſed Siberia, and paſſed from hence to the great continent of America; and that theſe were a lettered people, and ſkilled in all the ſciences of thoſe ages, but have been moſtly deſtroyed, in the northern part of America, by great hords of rambling Tartars, who followed them, and now form the ſavage Indians; and that many of the original people are to be found in South America.

CHARLES VALLANCEY.

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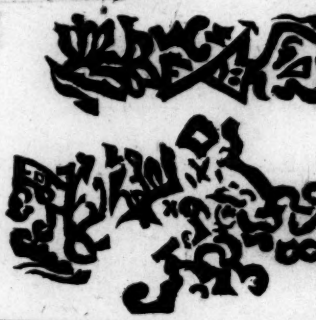
Inscription in North

Dr Greenwood's Copy 1730.

Dr Danforth's 1680.

Dr Cotton Mather's 1712.



C

N.º 2

D

E

N.º 3

N.º 1

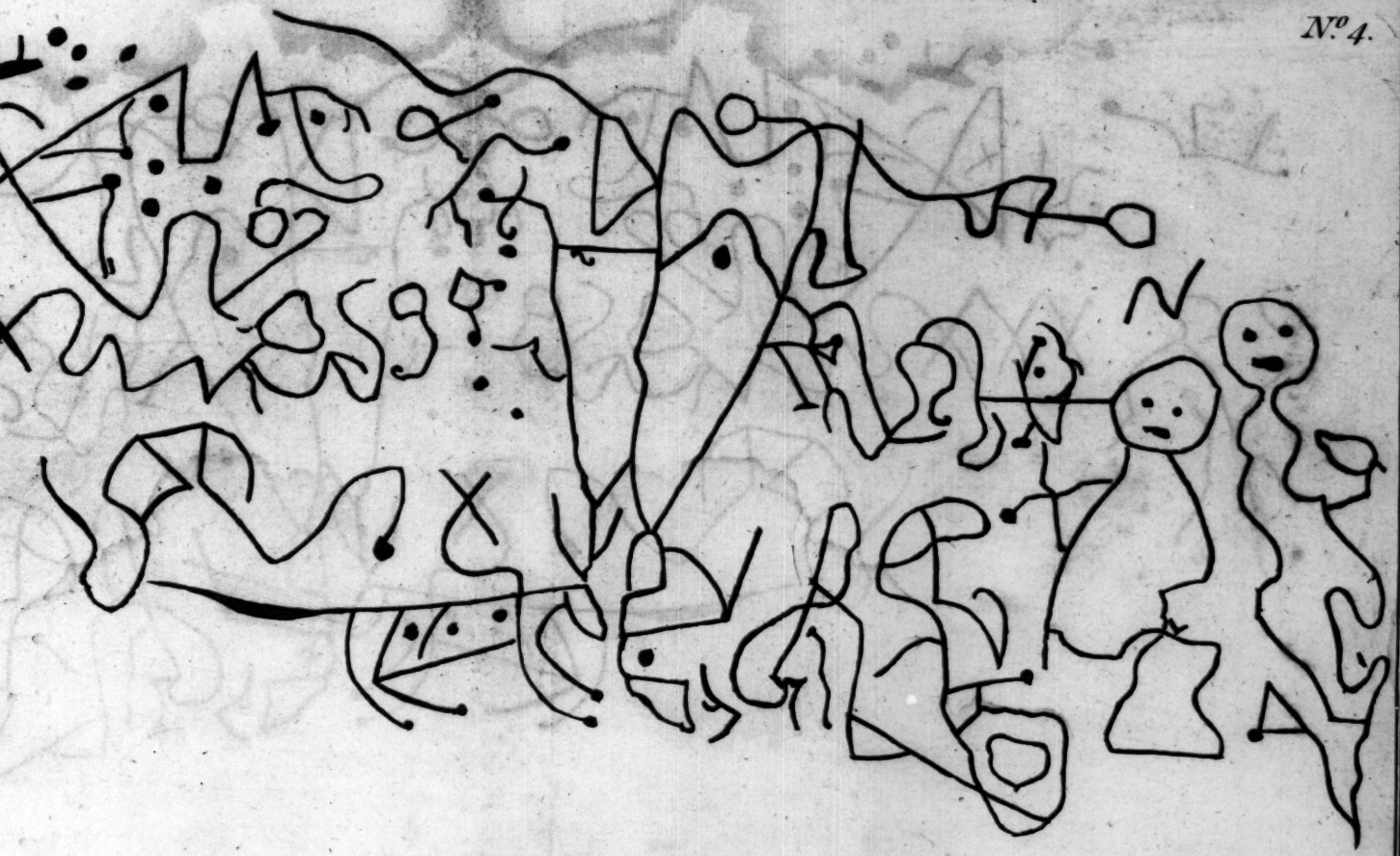
Mr. Sewell's 1763.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2

From Strahlenberg.

N.º 4.



N.º 5.